

Email Question #1: Sir, do you think that IDT Lodging is a thing of the past and that it will never be restored even if the CRA issues are addressed and a binding budget is passed?

Answer: The re-instatement of IDT Lodging will definitely not happen during this CRA and will probably not be available again for at least this fiscal year. Since 2005, OPTEMPO dollars have funded IDT Lodging. However, OPTEMPO dollars have been restricted and current guidance does not allow us to use that type of funding for IDT Lodging. So, although IDT Lodging itself is an approved program at the NGB level, there are no associated funds.

Email Question #2: Q1. Sir, how will the AC force reductions affect the Guard and the IL ARNG specifically? Q2. Sir, does the Senior Leadership already know if there will be force structure reductions in the IL ARNG and where the cuts will be?

Q1. Answer: The Army drawdown and restructuring is a Total Army effort. It will affect the Active Army, Army National Guard, and U.S. Army Reserves. We are already experiencing some of this change in the restructuring of the 33rd IBCT. Unfortunately, we do not know the comprehensive plan or timetable for drawdown. Ultimately, we must prepare ourselves for the likelihood of more change. We may see additional restructuring of IL ARNG forces and/or transformation of some organizations into new types of units. We may eventually lose some units from the IL ARNG force structure. In all cases, however, the IL ARNG will remain a strong and effective force to meet National and State mission requirements.

Q2. Answer: If the ARNG does experience the projected 5 percent reduction in end-strength spread over the next few years, we must assume the IL ARNG will experience some of these cuts. The current estimate is that the ILARNG could lose 2 to 3 percent of its current force structure over the next several years, whether in changes to unit structure (MTOEs), the reorganization of units, or the loss of units. The state staff is monitoring this closely and working with NGB to mitigate the effects on the IL ARNG.

Email Question #3: Sir, with ISIS and Ebola on the immediate horizon, do you think there will be new rounds of Guard Deployments? If so, which IL ARNG formations are likely to be deployed?

Answer: ISIS and Ebola activations will be handled as mobilizations have occurred in the past. Combatant Commanders of a theater of operations identify the type of forces needed to accomplish a mission. FORSCOM first looks to Active Component services to fill these requirements. Army Reserve and ARNG units then fill any requirement shortfalls. At this time, no ILARNG units have been sourced to fill any ISIS or Ebola missions.

Email Question #4: You say that AGR & Technician cuts will be through attrition. Will this be from the top down or the bottom up?

Answer: The entire organization will feel any cuts, no matter how they are made. However, by slowing new hires and not filling retirements, we expect to avoid RIF (Reduction in Force) layoffs.

Specifically, we anticipate several AGR retirements of O5s, E9s and E8s that will reduce our senior ranks. We also have a number of tech retirements. Some of those positions will be phased out.

From the bottom, we have a temporary hiring freeze and will only hire new (off-the-street) AGRs and Technicians when we can again bring on new employees.

As a result, we may adjust some full-time positions to fill vacancies in other programs.

Email Question #5: What are the criteria used in the ASMB, and why are they not communicated to the force prior to the board? Is the ASMB conducted internally or externally to the ILARNG? Does the leadership have any input into the final decision on whether to retain or non-retain?

Answer: The Active Service Management Board (ASMB) is based on the needs of the organization. HRO analyzes the full-time manning requirements and TAG sets the selection objectives for the next year. Each individual Soldier receives a memorandum signed by the HRO, which specifically states what criteria will be used in the ASMB. Additionally, this memorandum lists a suspense date to provide an update to this information prior to the board convening.

Board members receive the selection objectives by rank, set the criteria for reviewing eligible members, and review Soldiers' packets. Reviews are based on the 'whole Soldier' concept which includes performance ratings, education, compliance with physical qualifications, and all other information in the board packet.

The board is made up of Officers, and senior NCOs for the Enlisted ASMB, from the IL ARNG and other states' National Guard, with a majority of the members being from outside IL. The Adjutant General conducts a final review of the board results, but must accept or reject the board as a whole.

Audience Question #1: Where do we find The Strategic Goals cards for the Soldiers?

Answer: The Joint Staff mailed The Strategic Goals cards to the MSC's for distribution to the Soldiers at this month's IDT. Any unit that has not received cards by the November IDT should forward inquiries up through the chain of command for resolution.

Audience Question #2: We see a lot of facility upgrades and changes at Camp Lincoln. Do you have the same plans for our field facilities?

Answer: I believe you're referring to the new roof on the AGO building, the geothermal system purchased with a grant from the Department of Energy and state matching funds, and the MILCON project at the IMA in 2007.

In fact, most facility upgrades and changes do occur at our field facilities. In the past 2 years, less than 15 percent of the facilities' Sustainment, Restoration and Maintenance (SRM) budget was spent at Camp Lincoln. The rest was spent throughout other state facilities.

Examples of field facility upgrades include new roofs at facilities in Beardstown, Effingham, Bartonville, General Jones, Northwest, Calumet, Midway, Woodstock and other locations; new heating, ventilating and air conditioning projects at Mattoon, Effingham, Lawrenceville, Galva and other locations; and MILCON projects at Galesburg, Shiloh, Urbana, Milan, Carbondale, Mt. Vernon and Normal.

A new \$53 million AASF and readiness center is under construction at Kankakee, and the next MILCON project is an Alt-C range at Sparta.

Audience Question #3: Do you think the escalation of tensions in the St. Louis area could spill over into East St. Louis?

Answer: A Grand Jury will consider evidence against the Ferguson, MO law enforcement officer involved in the shooting of an unarmed youth this past summer. Depending on the outcome, civil unrest could occur in and around the St. Louis Metropolitan Area and extend into southern Illinois. Experience suggests demonstrations may turn destructive and violent.

Audience Question #4: Is Poland being considered for rotational European tours? If so, are we leveraging our successful SPP to gain additional training and mobilization opportunities?

Answer: Right now, via Operation Atlantic Resolve, US European Command maintains a consistent presence in Poland and the Baltics filled by USAREUR rotations, USAFE rotations, SC events and exercises. So far, the 173rd and 1st Cav have deployed to Poland for this and the 182d is executing an operational rotation in Poland.

Poland, NATO, EUCOM and USG will determine whether there will be a permanent or a rotational US force in Poland. AC requirements, funding, mobilization authority issues, and other considerations will determine any NG opportunities there. Until then, we will

continue our 25-plus SPP events per year -- the BEST co-deployment -- and will very likely see an increase in exercises and ODT's in Poland in the next two fiscal years.

Audience Question #5: Last year we saw a 18-21 day layoff of our Technician force. Do you see this as a future expectation with budget cuts?

Answer: We experienced two different furloughs (layoffs) last year. The first was an Administrative Furlough originally set to last for 22 days and based on sequestration. This "every other Monday" furlough was eventually reduced to 11 days, and then six days. It was the first DoD Administrative Furlough in decades, and occurred because the sequestration effects finally kicked in mid-year and provided insufficient time for personnel cuts to reduce payroll. This year, gradual cuts in full-time structure should avoid the need for furlough.

The second furlough last year was the Emergency Furlough effective 1 October. This was the direct result of Congress' failure to pass a budget which, in turn, temporarily shut down the government. We have had those before (1995 most recently) and, while stressful, back pay is generally issued at the conclusion. We received back pay following last year's Emergency Furlough.

Whenever the budget is used as a bargaining tool in Congress, there is a risk of furlough. But these showdowns are usually either resolved at the last minute or postponed with a Continuing Resolution as we have now.

Audience Question #6: With current and future budget constraints, do you see maintenance issues regarding maintaining our sophisticated equipment?

Answer: The most cost-effective maintenance is ongoing: before, during, and after use. This is the only smart, effective way to protect our equipment investment and the safety of our Soldiers and Airmen. Units can mitigate the effects of current and future budget constraints by planning and executing PMCS as a part of every training activity.

For example, several newer vehicles and TOC (SICP's) tent systems have recently required costly repairs. These maintenance issues exemplify the need for thorough PMCS and post-drill maintenance by operators.

The Illinois Army National Guard will maintain the appropriate readiness levels for all equipment as outlined in the published readiness goals.

Audience Question #7: If requirements/potential issues continue to increase (i.e. ISIS, CONUS terrorist acts, Ebola) can we anticipate funding increases to meet these requirements?

Answer: If we are tasked with Federal requirements such as ISIS, CONUS terrorist acts, or Ebola, the state will receive mobilization orders. In that case, OCO or Base funds will most likely be attached.

Audience Question #8: How do we see projections in mobilization trends, considering the current financial restraints vs. cultural conflicts?

Answer: Illinois is scheduled for our lowest level of mobilization in more than 10 years. Budget cuts have forced the Active Component to fulfill missions that were originally scheduled for the National Guard. As a result, NG units are being off-ramped as the 1544th was this summer.

However, new conflicts could necessitate an increase in National Guard mobilizations. All such mobilization requirements would also include funding for pre-mob training.

Audience Question #9: Considering future decreasing budgets, do you see a downsizing of the full-time force?

Answer: Yes, we expect to reduce both the AGR and Tech workforce approximately 10 percent over the next 5 years due to budget decreases and cuts to force structure. Because we were able to postpone cuts last year, we will most likely lose 2 to 4 percent of the full-time force this year and approximately 2 percent annually until we reach 10 percent. We expect attrition – slower hiring and unfilled retirements – to reduce the full-time force without layoffs.

Audience Question #10: Do you see a plus-up in using our two in-state training sites versus going out of state?

Answer: We have encouraged and will continue to encourage use of our own facilities whenever possible. However, the IL ARNG G3 does not see a plus-up in using MTC or STA versus going out of state. All IL ARNG units will continue to travel out of state for CSWQ, and artillery units will continue to travel out of state to conduct live-fire exercises and qualification. Additionally, some MOS-specific training is only offered out of state.

Audience Question #11: Do you foresee a restructuring of the Enlisted Promotion System to benefit Soldiers from having to drive long distances to drill weekends – where a Soldier can stay with the home unit up to E-7?

Answer: The G1 adjusted the Enlisted Promotion System (EPS) to afford Soldiers additional opportunities to remain in their unit of assignment. However, Soldiers will remain eligible for promotion in all areas that they elect to compete, and Soldiers will not travel any further than they elect.

The largest change to the EPS system affects travel for NCO promotions and has to do with the Request for Fill Process (RFF). RFFs are traditionally processed on a First-in-First-Out (FIFO) basis. This had caused unnecessary reassignments in cases where NCO vacancies already existed in an eligible Soldier's local unit of assignment. The G1 adjusted this process to account for current NCO vacancies.

We will work with the MSC S1 Sections to ensure promotion selections place priorities on filling these vacancies while mitigating movement as much as possible for promotions to the grades of E6 and below.

Audience Question #12: What is the ILNG doing to provide its Soldiers and Officers better tools to become well rounded, highly qualified Service members?

Answer: Several existing programs and products in development in the IL ARNG span a range of directorates and address Soldier development.

The J-Staff has produced a product that outlines the Individual Training and Education Program (ITEP) requirements for broadening your development in the arena of Joint Education.

The G1 is nearing completion of a new NGIL Pam 600-3 which will not only supersede several local policies but will also implement the Officer Career Management (OCM) Program. This program will encompass education and assignment requirements for the development of Officers in the ILARNG. It will also establish board procedures in one centrally located document, provide guidance on branch management and mentor groups, and more.

The G1 has also developed the "Leader and Soldier Guide to Board Actions" which details how to prepare for Enlisted Boards. It is intended for use at all echelons and to be treated as an NCODP when necessary.

Audience Question #13: Are there rotational forces opportunities in addition to those currently being done with Poland?

Answer: Rotational forces, whether from the Active Duty or from the National Guard, fill multiple operations outside of Afghanistan. Some of these operations include Guantanamo Bay, the Balkans, and the Sinai Peninsula. These are all considered mobilizations for the National Guard. Illinois Army National Guard units have participated in these operations in the past and have the opportunity to do so in the future. Additionally, we will continue to nominate units for overseas training opportunities in lieu of AT.

Phone-in Question #1: How do we get copies of the two books TAG held up in his speech? (Strategic Way Forward and Strategic Plan)

Answer: Both documents are located in PDF form on both IGO and GKO: Illinois National Guard J5 Directorate, document library/shared documents folder. The Joint Staff distributed limited glossy print versions of the Strategic Way Forward to key leaders.